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                    IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
                         SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
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                              HOUSTON DIVISION
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     DWIGHT RUSSELL, et. al.,
                 Plaintiffs,
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                                         ) CIVIL ACTION NO.
     VS.
                                         ) 4:19-CV-226
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     HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS, et. al.,
                                        ) 1:32 P.M.
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                 Defendants.
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                              STATUS CONFERENCE
                   BEFORE THE HONORABLE LEE H. ROSENTHAL
                     CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
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                                JUNE 11, 2020
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     APPEARANCES: (All parties appeared via video conference)
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FOR INTERESTED PARTY LINA HIDALGO, HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE:

21 MS. KATHRYN M. KASE

Kathryn M. Kase, Attorney at Law

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24

ALSO PRESENT:

25 JUDGE HERB RITCHIE 337th Criminal Court

Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography, transcript produced by computer. $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) +\left(1\right) +\left$

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1 PROCEEDINGS 2 (The following proceedings held via video conference.) 3 4 THE COURT: All right. I think we're ready to begin. 13:33:11 5 We'll start by taking -- having those who are, first, 6 7 representing parties or interested nonparties and have a speaking role today to identify yourselves and on whose behalf 8 9 you are speaking, and then I'll hear from any others who are 10 present, just so we know who's on the line. Go ahead, please. 13:33:3311 MR. MANNE: Neal Manne for plaintiffs. 13:33:3512 13:33:3913 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. MR. KARAKATSANIS: Alec Karakatsanis for plaintiffs. 13:33:4414 13:33:4715 JUDGE RITCHIE: Judge Herb Ritchie, and I'm an 16 interested nonparty appearing on behalf of the criminal district 17 judges of Harris County. THE COURT: Judge Ritchie, I think you're not only an 13:33:5518 19 interested nonparty, you are appearing as a critical-to-the-process interested nonparty. Welcome to the 20 21 party. 13:34:1122 JUDGE RITCHIE: Thank you, ma'am. MR. DURFEE: Good afternoon, Judge. This is Scott 13:34:1223 24 Durfee. I'm here for District Attorney Kim Ogg. THE COURT: Thank you. 13:34:1825

MR. FOGLER: Your Honor, this is Murray Fogler for the 13:34:20 1 2 sheriff. THE COURT: Thank you. 13:34:22 3 MS. SPINKS: Your Honor, this is Melissa Spinks for 13:34:26 4 Harris County. 5 THE COURT: Very good. 13:34:34 6 MR. BUNIN: Your Honor, it's Alex Bunin, nonparty, 13:34:39 7 Harris County Public Defender. 8 THE COURT: I have been practicing the pronunciation 13:34:43 9 of your name all week, Mr. Bunin. 10 MS. WOOD: And I'm Sarah Wood also with the public 13:34:4811 defender's office. 12 13:34:5213 THE COURT: Thank you. 13:34:5514 MS. KASE: Kathryn Kase, legal counsel to nonparty 15 Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. 13:35:0216 THE COURT: Thank you very much. 13:35:1017 MR. BIGGS: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Adam Biggs and Eric Hudson on behalf of state intervenors. 18 THE COURT: Very good. Thank you. 13:35:1419 13:35:1620 MR. THIESSEN: Judge, I'm Mark Thiessen, president of Harris County Criminal Lawyers Association. 21 THE COURT: Thank you for being here, sir. 13:35:2122 13:35:2223 MR. THIESSEN: Thank you. 13:35:2424 THE COURT: Okay. Are all the others who are 25 representing interested parties or interested nonparties on the

phone going to be present, but not speaking? 1 Ms. Rossi, for example? 13:35:43 2 MS. ROSSI: Yes. That's my intent, Your Honor. 13:35:46 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. 13:35:48 4 Mr. Steffensen? 13:35:49 5 MR. STEFFENSEN: Correct, Your Honor. Thank you. 13:35:51 6 THE COURT: And who are you appearing for, please? 13:35:54 7 13:35:57 8 MR. STEFFENSEN: I am here for the plaintiffs. THE COURT: Very good. Thank you. 13:35:59 9 Anybody else in that category? 13:36:0010 MR. GRINSTEIN: Your Honor, Joseph Grinstein for the 13:36:0711 plaintiffs. 12 THE COURT: Very good. 13:36:0913 13:36:0914 And I see -- is District Attorney Ogg intending to 15 speak, or will Mr. Durfee speak? 13:36:2016 MS. OGG: Mr. Durfee, my general counsel's here to 17 speak for me, but I'm present, Your Honor, and always available. 13:36:2518 THE COURT: Thank you. And I very much appreciate that. 19 MR. DURFEE: And, Your Honor --13:36:3020 THE COURT: All right. Yes? 13:36:3021 13:36:3022 MR. DURFEE: I'm sorry, Your Honor. This is Scott Durfee. Mr. Mitcham is our first assistant, and Mr. Driver is a 23 24 person who's knowledgeable on our IT issues. They're both 25 available as resource witnesses, as necessary.

THE COURT: That's fine, and I appreciate that.

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Those of you who are present as law clerks, interns, or on behalf of media entities, if you could please mute yourselves, and, of course, the rules prohibit you from broadcasting, transmitting or recording the proceedings, same rules that apply in court.

All right. I have received several of the reports and several e-mail communications over the past week. They made very interesting and informative reading, and I'd like to just go over some of those materials and find out where we are, and then I will turn it over to the parties and interested nonparties to raise other issues and fill me in on how we are doing on our shared goals.

So let me -- we had one issue that was raised the first week in June about good time credit for convicted felons who had been -- who are in the jail, not directly in our bailiwick, but it was a question raised. There was 76 inmates that had been identified as people who could be released if the credits that should have been applied, but were, apparently, disputed over in terms of how they were affected by various executive and other orders, that several courts ruled that the good time credits did apply, and the question was raised as to whether that should happen so that those 76 people could be released.

Can anyone speak to the status of that issue?

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JUDGE RITCHIE: I can tell you what I know,

Your Honor, which is --

THE COURT: And this is Judge Ritchie?

JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: Thank you.

JUDGE RITCHIE: -- somewhat limited. And in my court -- and I'm speaking on -- on behalf of my court. The issue -- the issue was raised that -- when a defendant pleaded, and he wasn't released as expected. And so the way the attorneys approached it -- since the governor's order prohibited the sheriff from allotting good time credit, the attorneys in my court, they apprised me of that, and I listened to their concerns.

So they filed a motion for new trial on the basis, I think, mainly of involuntary plea, because the defendant thought that he or she -- I don't remember which now -- was going to get that amount of credit and would be released. I granted the motion for new trial, and immediately after that, the defendant pleaded for time served, day for day, and that disposed of the case and that took care of that case.

I haven't -- I have not had an attorney raise that question to me since. I understand that there may be two people in my court that the sheriff has notified me that they would be eligible, but I haven't had an attorney give me the requisite predicate to rule on it.

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THE COURT: All right. This is the sheriff's inquiry --

JUDGE RITCHIE: The sheriff --

THE COURT: -- the sheriff sends --

JUDGE RITCHIE: -- was informing me, yes, that I think -- I believe there were two, if I remember, yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: So if I could ask Mr. Fogler: What is the -- your information as to the status of the good-time credit for convicted felons under the latest court decisions?

MR. FOGLER: As I advised the Court last week, the list of those 76 inmates was split among the 22 felony district courts, and the names were sent to each of the judges separately and individually.

As is the case with -- with virtually every issue in our case, every judge handles the -- their docket individually and separately, and some of them responded quickly without the necessity of a motion or other activity from the attorneys involved to release the particular inmates in their court that were part of that group; others did not.

So the -- the -- the bottom line is that the result has been spotty and inconsistent among the 22 different judges.

THE COURT: Do you know today how many of those 76 have been released?

MR. FOGLER: I do not.

THE COURT: All right. I would like to ask you to

find out, and those that have not been, please contact Mr. Bunin and Mr. Thiessen, on behalf of the private defense bar, and find out, of those who have not been released, what court they're in and whether any lawyer filed -- a motion seeking release on the basis of good-time credits has been filed and, if not, guys, get it filed.

(Multiple speakers; indiscernible.)

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THE COURT: -- all right? And if you could do that promptly and report back, that would be very helpful. Thank you.

All right. Second issue on my list of just going through your very helpful e-mails on which I was copied or that were directed to me, there are now two lists that have been provided to the judges. One is the first list, 400- -- and on that list, there are -- of those still in jail, 426 detainees that apparently -- well, they may not still be in jail. I'm not sure.

There are 426 detainees on the first list that have no prior violent convictions or current violent felony charges that would disqualify them for release without financial conditions; perhaps release, at all. Two hundred fifty-eight of those are still in the Harris County jail. So I need to understand something of why.

A second list consisting of arrests since the first list, there are 324 names, apparently, on that list that were

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sent to the felony courts the week of June 4th of people who apparently -- and this may be in dispute -- have no disqualifying felony prior convictions or present charges or other holds requiring detention.

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So I would like to know the status of those. I know that we got a very helpful e-mail from Judge Warren in which he says he had -- as of June 10th, his court, he had 12 people who had -- who were presumptively -- on a list. Three were released; two were subject to other holds; three did have prior disqualifying convictions for violent acts; four were potentially eligible, but of those, several had previously failed to appear when given PR bonds on prior charges or previously given PR bonds on these charges. It was unclear which one, but that doesn't matter, I don't think.

His inquiry was do you need individualized bail hearings for individuals who have previously failed to appear.

I'd be interested in hearing your reactions. My sense is that you may well, because there may be exigent or extraordinary circumstances that would explain and excuse the prior failure to appear in a way that would make it appropriate to grant the PR bond on the present charge.

And it would seem, to me, that an opportunity on the part of a defendant to make that case is part of the individualized bail determination inquiry, but that will not be an across-the-board rule, and it will largely depend on defense

counsel to raise the issue and the need for such a hearing. 1 2 do not fault the judges for not being able to figure out which of the four who previously failed to appear on PR bonds is now, 3 in good faith, seeking an individualized hearing to explain why 4 one should issue in this case nonetheless. 5 Defense counsel would need to be filing those motions 13:47:43 7 when appropriate, I would think. I would welcome thoughts from others more familiar with the process than I. 8 Mr. Fogler, Mr. Bunin, Mr. Thiessen --13:47:53 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Your Honor --13:47:5510 13:47:5511 THE COURT: -- on behalf of the plaintiffs? 13:48:0112 MR. FOGLER: Your Honor, I would just echo the comments that I made a moment ago because it applies equally 13 14 Judge Warren was the only judge who provided the kind of 15 fulsome explanation that we saw in his e-mail, but --13:48:2116 THE COURT: Because it was enormously helpful. 13:48:2517 MR. FOGLER: It was, indeed. But as to the other 21 of the felony courts, there is a -- there are a wide range of 18 different handling methods or, sometimes, non-methods in 19 connection with how they receive these lists. Some of them 20 don't do anything with the list. Some of them are proactive, 21 and some wait for the defense counsel to make some motion. 22 MR. THIESSEN: And, Judge, if I may, just -- just to 13:49:0123 be frank, I think we have about seven to 800 criminal defense 24

lawyers in HCCLA, and if you guys send me the list -- I know

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most of these. I can get in touch with them. 1 If you tell me who these are, I will personally -- I 13:49:11 will, personally, reach out and call them. But I'm just --3 THE COURT: Mr. Fogler, add him to the e-mail list. 13:49:17 MR. THIESSEN: So I will reach out to those lawyers. 13:49:22 5 I will tell them, "Hey, you have got this." But I hate to tell 6 7 you: Some of these lawyers are lazy, and they're not doing it in other --8 THE COURT: I know. 13:49:30 9 MR. THIESSEN: I don't know how to make them do it. 13:49:3110 13:49:3311 THE COURT: Well, those -- those who you know -- how 12 are you going to know which lawyers are representing which 13 defendant? 13:49:3914 MR. THIESSEN: Well, I can look that up, right? 15 That's public record. 13:49:4316 THE COURT: Okay. Right. 13:49:4317 So, Mr. Fogler, if the sheriff can include Mr. Thiessen and Mr. Bunin on the list every time it's sent out 18 19 to the individual courts, that will put Mr. Thiessen in a much better position to proactively seek the help of the defense 20 lawyers, and I hope that helps. I agree with you we do not have 21 perfect control as of this point. 22 JUDGE WARREN: Judge Rosenthal -- Judge Rosenthal? 13:50:1523 THE COURT: Yes. Who's --13:50:1524 13:50:1525 JUDGE WARREN: This is Judge Warren --

THE COURT: -- speaking, please?

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JUDGE WARREN: This is Judge Brian Warren. I would be more than happy to contact or send an e-mail to the prosecution and to any defense lawyer who's representing a particular defendant who's on one of my lists.

THE COURT: That would be terrific.

JUDGE WARREN: So I think --

THE COURT: And if you can --

JUDGE WARREN: -- what Mark --

THE COURT: Judge Warren --

JUDGE WARREN: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: -- because your practices have been praised as a role model, the more you can do to encourage your colleagues, with Judge Ritchie's help, to follow your good example, we all want those who should and can be released to be released and ease the risk of continued overcrowding for everyone --

JUDGE WARREN: I couldn't agree --

THE COURT: -- and protection of their constitutional rights.

So the more you can do to encourage others to do as you are doing and to share the information with the defense lawyers, "I" -- "I haven't released this guy because it looks like he had a prior failure to appear. Do you want to hear it?" Whatever the appropriate outreach would be, I leave that to you.

JUDGE WARREN: And I made my -- and I'll be more than 13:51:34 1 2 happy to -- what -- on my list, it turned out to be less than 3 ten people -- or ten defense attorneys who I would have to contact. So I don't mind sending those e-mails. 4 THE COURT: And I suspect that when you spread all 13:51:46 5 this amongst 22 judges and winnow it down to those that don't 6 7 have -- clearly don't have eligibility for release on a PR bond, you're going to have a manageable number on any given day. 8 JUDGE WARREN: And I don't mean to cut off --13:52:08 9 13:52:0910 (Multiple speakers; indiscernible.) 13:52:0911 JUDGE WARREN: -- Mr. Thiessen. So I just think it 12 might be -- what the -- the task that he is agreeing to 13 undertake I think is a lot -- having seen the list, may be a lot 14 for him to accomplish on his own, as opposed to having 22 15 individual judges doing it themselves, and that was --13:52:2716 THE COURT: Well, if --13:52:2717 JUDGE WARREN: -- the only reason I wanted to add 18 that. THE COURT: I believe in belt and suspenders. If you 13:52:2919 can do it with Mr. Thiessen and Mr. Bunin, with his people, that 20 should help. 21 JUDGE WARREN: I would be more than happy to do that. 13:52:3922 13:52:4223 MR. THIESSEN: I can call them. You know, I'll Google their number and call them, but if they don't get the message or 24

I can't, you know -- I don't know how I can stay on track with

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390 people. 1 THE COURT: Well, that's why the judge's proposal is a 13:52:52 large help --3 MR. THIESSEN: Yes. 13:52:59 THE COURT: -- and it also -- and yes, obviously, we 13:52:59 5 recognize that you have a limit on your authority over any of 6 7 these individual lawyers. MR. KARAKATSANIS: Your Honor --13:53:11 8 THE COURT: You have a limit. 13:53:11 9 Yes, sir? 13:53:1210 13:53:1311 12 13 14 15 important for the Court to understand. 13:53:2616 17 18 conversations --19 13:53:3920 13:53:4221 22 23

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MR. KARAKATSANIS: Your Honor, this is Alec Karakatsanis, if I may make a couple of preliminary framing points that I think may help this discussion. One is a legal point, and two are factual points that I think are very The first is the legal point, which is that the word "eligible for release" has been thrown around by various parties, including the Court, in this conversation and previous THE COURT: That's a shorthand. It's a shorthand. MR. KARAKATSANIS: Everyone is eligible for release under Texas law and under federal law. No one may be detained unless there is a finding, under Texas and federal law, that their detention is necessary. And --THE COURT: I understand, Mr. Karakatsanis. We're

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talking about the practicalities now in trying to work out a
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             process that will help that. And I know you understand that,
             but --
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                       MR. KARAKATSANIS: I understand, Your Honor. I wanted
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             to make it very clear, though, that I don't think, from our --
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             from our understanding, that -- that most of the felony judges
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             are -- understand that, that point, and --
                       THE COURT: I think they do. I think they do.
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             Whether they are feeling equipped --
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                       MR. KARAKATSANIS: (Indiscernible).
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                       THE COURT: -- to deal with it is the issue that we're
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             dealing with, and that takes me --
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                       MR. KARAKATSANIS: (Indiscernible).
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                       THE COURT: -- to my next point, but go ahead first,
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             please.
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                       MR. KARAKATSANIS: Just for a moment. There is --
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                       THE COURT: Of course.
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                       MR. KARAKATSANIS: -- confusion. Several of the
             felony judges have struck down the executive order all together
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             as unconstitutional. Those judges clearly believe that anyone
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             is eligible for release.
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                       Other felony judges I think, having heard this Court's
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             comments from last week being filtered through various sources,
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             believe that only some people on the sheriff's lists are
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             entitled to bail hearings, and I wanted to make that factual --
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the Court aware of that factual point.

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THE COURT: All right. I appreciate that.

MR. KARAKATSANIS: We -- and there is tremendous confusion among even the felony judges and the parties about what types of prior offenses would even qualify for the executive order in those courts that haven't struck it down yet. So I wanted to make that point very clear.

The second point is there are 39 more people in custody as of yesterday than when the Court had its last hearing on June 4th, including 26 more people in custody on felony pretrial cases. This Court, last week, asked that bail hearings be set automatically for at least the people on the lists. It's our understanding, and I wanted to inform the Court, that has not happened. Those hearings have not --

THE COURT: That was my next question. That's my next question, if we can get to exactly those mechanics because that's where the rubber and the road would meet. You're absolutely right about that, Mr. Karakatsanis. And thank you --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Judge Rosenthal, may I respond
to that?

THE COURT: Of course. Yes, of course. And -- but then I do want to get to the interesting proposal of the sheriff for the staggered individualized bail hearings scheduled that would permit it to be done often, efficiently, virtually, and be set up on an automatic basis, with counsel involved, because of

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the added ways we've made that available.

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So let's go ahead with your comment, and then we'll talk about the sheriff.

JUDGE WARREN: And very brief on that. Knowing that I was going to be participating in this Zoom call, I actually talked to other judges. I have not had anyone come in as a new case since, I believe -- I lose track of days being home with children. So I apologize.

But since last week, I believe it was Thursday when we had that call that I was not present on, understanding what this Court's wishes were, I have been watching my new cases every single day to see if anyone has been detained who would then, presumptively, be -- when you would want us to have additional scrutiny, and then have an additional immediate bond hearing for personal recognizance bond.

I haven't had any individuals who have met that bearing. I spoke with Chris Morton briefly before this phone call. He has had two people this week who he's had those hearings on, one of which was not released on a burglary, because we have a Texas statute that says only an elected sitting district court judge may release people on a PR bond on a burglary.

He actually released that individual -- that was Judge Morton -- and then he had a 23-kilo case of a person who is not from Harris County, from surrounding areas, who was caught with

23 kilos of cocaine by the DEA, and he did not release.

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So I know we've had ten of them, is my information that I've gotten. So I've been told -- and I'm not sure what information Mr. Karakatsanis has been given, but I've been told by judges that we've had ten of these hearings this week based on new arrests. I have not had anyone pop up on that list.

I've been diligently checking on it; however, I know that these hearings have been taking place, at least per my conversation with Judge Morton.

I've had other judges tell me they haven't had these hearings because they haven't had someone who met the eligibility requirement this week, but I know that Mr. Morton -- or Judge Morton, rather, has. So I just want to add that in and give you some more information.

MR. KARAKATSANIS: Your Honor, we were told last week at this Court's hearing that there was a list of people, and that all of those -- and it was this Court's wish that all of those people be automatically set for bail hearings. That's all I was referring to. Those automatic bail hearings have not been set, have not occurred.

MR. FOGLER: Perhaps, Your Honor, I can elucidate just a bit. The sheriff and the judges have been conferring about a -- a procedure, a mechanism for these virtual hearings. The process has now been set up as it applies to new arrests that have occurred.

I am told -- and I -- this is secondhand, so I --1 2 it's -- but it's contrary to Judge Warren's information, that 3 there have been only two formal bail hearings by video, one yesterday and one today, of new arrestees. I believe 4 Mr. Karakatsanis is correct that with respect to the list -- the 5 two lists --6 THE COURT: Excuse me. 14:00:07 MR. FOGLER: -- the Court has --14:00:10 8 14:00:10 9 THE COURT: Excuse me. Excuse me. I was disconnected for about the last five minutes. I don't know what I missed, 10 and I apologize. 11 14:00:2112 So I think I just interrupted Judge Ritchie, and I apologize for that. But after Mr. Karakatsanis and 13 14 Judge Warren, what'd I miss? 14:00:3615 MR. KARAKATSANIS: Your Honor, this is Mr. Karakatsanis. I made an additional comment that was simply 16 17 to the effect that last week we heard, in this Court's courtroom, about a large list from the sheriff, and this Court 18 19 expressed its wish that automatic bail hearings be set, pursuant to the sheriff's protocol, for all the people on that list. 20 I was reporting to the Court that those hearings have 14:00:5521 not been set and have not occurred, and then Mr. Fogler was 22

chiming in, I think, when this Court rejoined.

THE COURT: Okay. And we do have a detailed proposal

from the sheriff on a docket of virtual bail hearings. Group A

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for courts 174 through 208; Group B for courts 209 through 351. Group A would deal with the pretrial detainees at the 701 location on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and those still located at the 1200 Baker location on Mondays and Wednesdays. The -- it would be flipped for Group B.

The dockets would be made up of specific spaces on specific floors scheduled for a specific time each day where the inmates would be. Six courts at a time for pretrial detainees at Baker, and six time -- simultaneously, obviously, for the 701 location; 12 total. Forty-five minute time sessions; 15 minutes between the sessions. It's ready to roll as of Monday of this week.

Is it rolling? Obviously, a great deal of thought and work went into that.

MR. FOGLER: I don't believe -- this is Murray Fogler for the sheriff. I don't believe that the felony judges accepted the proposal that you are referring to. They have put in place a mechanism to have formal bail hearings for new arrestees, but Mr. Karakatsanis is correct. I -- I believe that I -- there have not been any formal bail hearings for the inmates who are on the two lists that you previously referred to.

As I was -- I think -- think you may have been disconnected when I said that there have been two virtual formal bail hearings this week, one yesterday and one today, of newly

1 arrested inmates in the jail.

THE COURT: I'm glad that those are occurring. Let's go back to the ones who have been on the lists, not yet released, identified as having eligibility, to use the term loosely, that is, no prior convictions for violent felonies. They're on the list of acceptable felonies for PR release, no current violent charges, no sexual assault charges, and no other detention or other holds -- ICE detention or other holds.

So we have a list of people who were previously identified, 258, still, from the first list, and 324 on the second that are, apparently, still waiting for formal individualized bail hearings. What's the status of getting those -- they're not new arrests, but they're waiting.

What can be done to get hearings for those individuals? And this is a question for Judge Ritchie, for Mr. Bunin, for Mr. Thiessen, as well as others.

(No response.)

THE COURT: No one has any thoughts, or are you all disconnected?

JUDGE RITCHIE: I was on mute. I'm sorry, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Am I connected?

JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes, ma'am. I can hear you.

I have --

THE COURT: All right.

JUDGE RITCHIE: My information that I would give you

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would be contrary to some of the information that you've heard. 1 2 I have been furnished a list of -- from the sheriff's office on more than one occasion. I've gone through that list and 3 considered the people and given bonds that I thought were 4 5 appropriate. Yesterday -- I had the list. It was a repeat of a 14:05:33 7 list I previously had, but I had everyone on that list placed on my docket. I did have a hearing yesterday, not -- not a virtual 8 hearing. The defendant was in the holdover, and I had the 9 defendant brought out before me with counsel, went on the record 10 and had the hearing, and granted the relief that was 11 12 appropriate. 14:06:0513 The -- also, I had one that was on the list that has 14 pleaded for back time, and all -- all those that weren't reached 15 yesterday have been carried over till tomorrow, and that will --14:06:2116 THE COURT: And is this people who -- dating back to 17 April, May, in terms of how long they may have been there? JUDGE RITCHIE: Some of them -- some of them have, 14:06:3118 19 yes, but this -- this is a list that I've previously gone through before. Apparently, on one, there had already been a 20 prior hearing, and a PR bond was denied on that, but I said, 21 22 "Bring" --THE COURT: Formal or informal? Was it a formal or 14:06:4723 24 informal hearing? JUDGE RITCHIE: Judge, I don't remember. I don't 14:06:5225

remember on this particular defendant. It just says --1 THE COURT: All right. 14:06:55 2 JUDGE RITCHIE: It just says that I denied a PR bond 14:06:56 3 on 4/16/20. So I -- I can't --4 THE COURT: Well, we're talking about a formal 14:07:02 5 hearing, which may not be necessary unless there's a previous 6 7 denial after an informal consideration. JUDGE RITCHIE: Right. Right. Yesterday that I had 14:07:13 8 was a formal hearing on the record with the court reporter, 9 and --10 THE COURT: And my question -- my question, Judge, is 14:07:2111 can those be made -- set quickly --12 14:07:2813 JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes. THE COURT: -- and how promptly --14:07:2814 14:07:3015 JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes. THE COURT: -- and in numbers? 14:07:3016 14:07:3217 JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes. And the numbers, I think you're 18 going -- you're going to find the numbers are not quite as great as you've been led to believe. After --19 THE COURT: They may not be, but --14:07:4120 14:07:4421 JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes. If I can, I'll -- I can explain 22 to you the process that's now been put in place. THE COURT: All right. Please do, sir. 14:07:5123 14:07:5324 JUDGE RITCHIE: After -- after our conference on 25 Thursday, immediately six agencies got together, the district

court's administration, the district clerk's office, pretrial services, universal services, the Harris County Sheriff's Office and the district attorney, and they were told we needed a project that would identify these people that were denied a PR bond by the magistrate, and that the Court would like to have -- us have a hearing within 48 hours.

They worked diligently over the weekend. All the -all the agencies worked together very well, and they put
together a program, and I have -- I had the first one yesterday,
and the program works like this: If someone has been denied a
PR bond, and they go through this -- this program, and they will
immediately, if they're -- if they're arrested, if it's before
12:01, they'll show on the next day's docket. If it's after
12:01, it's going to go on the following docket.

Yesterday, for the first time, there were four, total, that were pulled and shown to be eligible. One hit my court, and I immediately, rather than carrying it to the next day, I had a formal bond hearing --

THE COURT: Which is terrific.

JUDGE RITCHIE: -- and I understand that the process is still working, and that as -- as of tomorrow, I think a total of nine have been pulled, and they're set automatically for a hearing before the various district judges, and they'll be addressed at that point.

Now, I --

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THE COURT: So my question to you -- Judge Ritchie, if
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             I may ask one clarifying question.
                       JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes, ma'am.
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                       THE COURT: It sounds like the process you're
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            describing is for new arrestees; is that correct?
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                       JUDGE RITCHIE: That's correct.
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                       THE COURT: So what are you doing about the big
             backlog.
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                       JUDGE RITCHIE: All right.
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                       THE COURT: -- of people who --
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                       JUDGE RITCHIE: Well --
14:10:0611
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                       THE COURT: -- are waiting and did not have this
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            procedure in place --
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                       JUDGE RITCHIE: What I --
                       THE COURT: -- when they were arrested?
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14:10:1416
                       JUDGE RITCHIE: What I'm telling the Court right now,
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            I don't know that the backlog is that great based on what I have
             in my court. The --
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                       THE COURT: It may not be, but all the more reason to
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             get to it immediately.
                       JUDGE RITCHIE: Right. I had them all -- as I was
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             saying, I had them all --
14:10:2823
                       THE COURT: If it's not that great for any individual
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             judge --
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                       JUDGE RITCHIE: I -- I said for my court. I can't
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tell -- I can't speak for another judge's docket. But yesterday, I had --

THE COURT: And I agree.

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my docket for review, and I -- I reviewed -- and some pleaded and others were taken care of. Those that were not taken care of yesterday are all on my docket tomorrow, and they will be addressed tomorrow, and that should be --

THE COURT: And I get --

JUDGE RITCHIE: -- the end of that list.

THE COURT: And that's terrific, Judge, but I would like to have -- may I inquire, then -- again, putting it on the sheriff to recirculate to each judge a list of everyone who is still detained, not a new arrest, who is potentially eligible -- even if they've had a prior failure to appear, there's a basis to have that explained and promptly set for an individualized bail determination hearing -- the backlog, for each judge -- each of the 22 judges, the defendants -- the detainees in their court who are not new arrests and have not benefited from this new improved procedure, can we get that quickly to the judges so Judge Ritchie can apply his new procedure to those prior arrests?

MR. FOGLER: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Fogler?

MR. FOGLER: Yes.

Case 4:19-cv-00226 Document 172 Filed on 06/13/20 in TXSD Page 29 of 72 $^{-29}$ THE COURT: All right. Judge Ritchie, will that help 14:12:21 1 2 you and your colleagues? JUDGE RITCHIE: Absolutely. Send us a list, and we'll 14:12:26 3 look at each one of them, and some of the names may be 4 duplicative. We've seen them before, but that's fine. 5 THE COURT: That's all right. 14:12:35 6 14:12:36 7 JUDGE RITCHIE: Just send the list --THE COURT: It doesn't matter because you've already 14:12:37 8 had a formal bail hearing before. 9 JUDGE RITCHIE: Right. Right. 14:12:4010 THE COURT: So you need -- it's not duplicative. 14:12:4111

> JUDGE RITCHIE: Well, some of them had a formal bail hearing, I'm certain. I can't tell you which ones at this point because I don't have that in front of me. Some of them have had a formal -- most of them are informal, great majority.

> > THE COURT: Right. That's --

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JUDGE RITCHIE: Rarely do I have a formal one, but I believe I have in the past. But most of them -- most of them are informal and the attorneys, because of the technology, they can Zoom in and Zoom out from the courtroom to courtroom to ask judges to consider the bond status of their clients, which they do.

THE COURT: Well, they're entitled to a formal hearing with evidence, if that's what they want to do. They're entitled to that.

JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes.

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THE COURT: So when I say an opportunity -- a formal individualized bail determination hearing, I mean that they are entitled to that opportunity.

JUDGE RITCHIE: We grant them that opportunity.

THE COURT: And that's my question. If you're -- if you can grant it promptly -- I understand you are granting them promptly for new arrests, but now you have to address this backlog. And there may be, as you say, a relatively small number of those who have not already been released who are eligible because they don't have disqualifying prior convictions for violence, for example.

But the fact that there are relatively smaller numbers when viewed not as an aggregate, but divided in 22 different ways for each judge, makes it all the more manageable.

JUDGE RITCHIE: Right.

THE COURT: And removes -- and removes reasons for delay.

JUDGE RITCHIE: Right. And then when the sheriff sends the list to the judges, if he would be kind enough to copy the district attorney, because the district attorney is helpful in bringing to our attention something that maybe has not been known before. The pretrial services may only have information for convictions, arrests in Harris County, but the district attorney's office can inform the Court whether there are

convictions from out of state, and we're able to make an 1 2 informed decision. THE COURT: And I think that would be helpful. I also 14:15:00 3 believe that Mr. Bunin should be copied, Mr. Thiessen should be 4 copied, and Mr. Manne, Mr. Karakatsanis and Ms. Rossi should be 5 6 copied. MR. THIESSEN: Judge, could I -- could I make a 14:15:19 7 suggestion? Would you mind if I put this list on the Harris 8 County Criminal Lawyers website and just put a blast to 9 everybody, Look up your name and see if you have a client? 10 mean, I'll do that, if I'm allowed to share this list with the 11 12 general membership, and I would go ahead --THE COURT: Any objection? 14:15:3713 14:15:3914 MR. THIESSEN: -- myself or my office to start calling 15 them or e-mailing people as we get down that list to help these judges. But I don't mind sending a blast out to the entire 16 17 HCCLA list. THE COURT: That's Mr. Thiessen speaking. 14:15:5018 Is there any objection to that --14:15:5119 14:15:5320 MR. THIESSEN: Yes. THE COURT: -- on behalf of any party? 14:15:5321 JUDGE RITCHIE: Not as a party --14:15:5622 14:15:5623 THE COURT: Anybody? 14:15:5624 JUDGE RITCHIE: Not as -- I'm not objecting, but I 25 would hope that the list is a current one, and it has been --

THE COURT: Yes.

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JUDGE RITCHIE: -- reviewed and not be the same list.

Some of these people have already pleaded. They show on the list. They're already out of jail. They've already made bond. They shouldn't have been on the list in the first place.

THE COURT: If the sheriff can make -- if the sheriff can bring it up to date, that would be great. So you would take the first list that was generated when we started having these discussions, bring it up to date to eliminate those that have already been released or have pleaded, and make sure that it is both current and thorough, and send it -- if nobody objects, send it to Mr. Thiessen for posting on the website, send it to Mr. Bunin for distribution within his office to the lawyers so they know what to do, and do it promptly. And send it to Mr. Manne, Mr. Karakatsanis, Ms. Rossi.

Anyone else?

MR. FOGLER: We will do so, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Manne, Mr. Karakatsanis, is that acceptable to you?

MR. KARAKATSANIS: Number one, Your Honor, we were actually not copied on the various communications that this Court referenced earlier --

THE COURT: Well, I'm now telling -- I'm now asking if there's -- I'm now asking that you be added to that list.

MR. KARAKATSANIS: Yes. Thank you.

And -- and, secondly, we don't have an objection to 14:17:34 1 2 this, just wanted to get some clarification from the Court. I 3 mean, it's our understanding that at the June 4th hearing a week ago, there was a list, and this Court asked that bail hearings 4 be set automatically in the coming days for the people on that 5 list. And I think what we heard today is that that just didn't 6 7 happen. There has been no hearings. That backlog has not been touched. 8 And now what I think that we're hearing is --14:18:02 9 14:18:0310 THE COURT: I think you're right. You're right. 11 has only been new arrests. What we're now talking about is the 12 backlog, as well as the new arrests. 14:18:1113 JUDGE RITCHIE: That's not true. 14:18:1214 THE COURT: So I think --14:18:1315 JUDGE RITCHIE: That's not true, Your Honor. I just 16 told you --14:18:1717 THE COURT: Well, you did have hearings for the new 18 arrests. JUDGE RITCHIE: Absolutely. We've had hearings, and I 14:18:2019 had one yesterday on that list. So --20 14:18:2421 THE COURT: On the new arrests? 14:18:2522 JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes. On the --14:18:2523 THE COURT: Was this --JUDGE RITCHIE: Right. 14:18:2524 14:18:2525 THE COURT: -- the --

JUDGE RITCHIE: Right.

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(Multiple speakers; indiscernible.)

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. There were multiple people speaking.

THE COURT: Yeah. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. Judge Ritchie, was that the new arrests?

JUDGE RITCHIE: I did the new arrests.

THE COURT: I'm talking about the backlog.

JUDGE RITCHIE: I'm talking about the, quote, backlog, which I don't think is going to be quite as onerous as the -- as you've been told. On that list --

THE COURT: I would agree.

JUDGE RITCHIE: I had a hearing yesterday on that list and granted relief. And all those people were on my docket yesterday, and those that weren't reached are carried over till tomorrow, and after that it should be finished.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Your Honor --

THE COURT: Make sure -- the sheriff is going to get you the list of the backlog so that you'll be able to make sure that, in fact, you have captured all of them and provided prompt automatic virtual -- virtual individualized bail determination hearings for all of them.

MR. DURFEE: Your Honor, this is Scott Durfee. I just wanted to clarify that the district attorney, you know, is -- is supportive of the idea of -- of these bail hearings, but we

would ask for some reasonable notice before they're scheduled. 1 2 We're not asking for a lengthy period of time, but we do need to have an opportunity to prepare for these hearings. 3 THE COURT: The day before will be plenty. I agree 14:19:53 with you, and the day before, when they're set, as Judge Ritchie 5 has indicated -- you've got the dockets. That would be your 6 7 notice. MR. DURFEE: Your Honor, I think one day's notice may 14:20:08 8 be difficult in these proceedings. I'd ask for at least two or 9 three --10 14:20:1311 THE COURT: If you need more, you can ask -- if you 12 need more, you can ask the judge for more, can't you? 14:20:1813 MR. DURFEE: We certainly can, Judge. 14:20:2114 THE COURT: I suggest -- because many of them, you may 15 not need more time. You may be able to get it up and say, "We don't object" --16 14:20:2717 MR. DURFEE: I just don't --14:20:3018 THE COURT: -- or, "We do object for these reasons." 14:20:3219 MR. DURFEE: I just wanted to be very clear that if there are going to be a number of bail hearings scheduled on the 20 same day with -- with virtually no notice, there's going to 21 be -- you can't -- the expectation should not be that we're 22 going to be ready to litigate every one of those bail hearings 23 24 on that day. THE COURT: And you may not be able to, but they 14:20:5325

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should be set. You will have access promptly to the docket settings. You will have plenty of -- you will know if there is any need for more time. In many of them, there may not be. In some, there may be.

Rather than delay them all because a few may need another day or two. It seems more prudent, since there's already been a significant delay for this backlog, to presumptively set them. And this backlog you have had standing there for a long time, some of them with no individualized bail determination hearing.

MR. KARAKATSANIS: Your Honor, if I may --

THE COURT: And that should -- yes?

MR. KARAKATSANIS: Trying to understand what happened in the past week after this Court said that a denial of a personal bond at the magistration should be treated as a request for an automatic bail setting, that should be set. There were several hundred people on the sheriff's list.

Judge Ritchie committed to doing it on behalf of the other judges. That hasn't been done. The sheriff attempted to get it done. Still wasn't done. I'd like to understand --

THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Karakatsanis, I think the answer that I received -- and, Judge Ritchie, you need to correct me if I'm wrong -- is that that is being done, at least by him and by Judge Warren, and, he believes, on behalf of the other judges, virtually, and I gather they each declared their

1 homes courtrooms for the purpose of the Open Records Act.

You need to verify that for me, Judge Ritchie.

JUDGE RITCHIE: I --

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THE COURT: But assuming that -- hold on -- that this has been done for new arrests, but not for the backlog, not for the people who were arrested before this last week, and that's what we're talking about now.

Judge Ritchie --

JUDGE RITCHIE: It's my --

THE COURT: -- what'd I say that was wrong?

JUDGE RITCHIE: What I'm saying is that to the best of my knowledge, each judge is reviewing and setting those that were on the lists that have been presented. On the new -- on the new arrests, as they're coming in -- and like I say, they're -- they don't seem to be, so far, that many.

Some judges may do them -- may do them remotely.

Other judges, such as myself, I come to the courthouse every day. I take the bench every day I have a docket, and I do them here at the court, and they'll be done there not at the -- not on a Zoom hearing in the sheriff's office, though we appreciate their cooperation.

THE COURT: As long as you don't have -- as long as you -- well, because the issue is as long as you have enough courtrooms. You can't use the lack of courtrooms as a reason not to have the hearings promptly, number one. Number two, as

long as you have attorneys who are willing to come to court and able to do so --

JUDGE RITCHIE: They appear by Zoom, most of them.

THE COURT: -- whether prosecutors or defense lawyers.

If they can appear by Zoom, with you in court, then that is not a problem.

JUDGE RITCHIE: I'm sorry?

THE COURT: Can they?

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JUDGE RITCHIE: Yes. They're all invited -- defense counsel and the district attorneys are all able to appear by Zoom.

THE COURT: Very good. That's helpful to know.

JUDGE RITCHIE: I don't require --

question, there is -- for those judges who are using the prior lists, it will be provided -- up-to-date lists, accurate as to present status of the detainees, identifying the ones who are potentially eligible for PR bonds and who have had them denied, whether at the magistration level or informal bail hearing, and a formalized bail hearing promptly set with notice to all the parties that have been listed, including plaintiff's counsel in this case, Mr. Thiessen, Mr. Bunin, obviously the DA, and hearings will be held promptly -- individualized, evidentiary if needed, bail determination hearings, and that an updated list will be provided by the sheriff as quickly as practical, which I

hope will be before the end of the day tomorrow, as well as new 1 2 arrests that continually are added. Does that work? 14:25:58 3 MR. BIGGS: Adam Biggs, Your Honor. This is Adam 14:26:00 4 Biggs for state intervenors. May we also please -- may we 5 please also be included on the transmittal e-mail, Your Honor? 6 14:26:16 7 THE COURT: Fine with me. Any objection? 14:26:20 8 (No response.) 14:26:20 9 THE COURT: Very good. MS. SPINKS: And I would like --14:26:2110 14:26:2211 THE COURT: Waiting for you to ask. 14:26:2412 MS. SPINKS: And, Your Honor, we'd like to be included 13 as well, Harris County. 14:26:2814 THE COURT: All right. I need each of you to send 15 your request to the sheriff so that he can keep track. 14:26:3616 MR. BIGGS: Happy to do so. 14:26:3617 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Your Honor --14:26:3918 THE COURT: Ms. Spinks -- I'm sorry. Ms. Jimenez, is 19 that okay with you? (No verbal response.) 14:26:4320 MR. FOGLER: I will answer for her. 14:26:4721 14:26:4922 THE COURT: Ms. Jimenez, are you with us? 14:26:5123 MR. FOGLER: We will make sure everybody gets copied. THE COURT: Go ahead, Mr. Fogler. 14:26:5324 14:26:5525 MR. FOGLER: I said we will make sure --

THE COURT: You are a great man.

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MR. FOGLER: -- everyone gets copied.

THE COURT: And I said you're a great man. That was a thank you.

I think that would be very helpful, and the transparency it adds to the process can only be useful.

All right. What else -- so now I have the final report from Mr. Banks who said that of the 1,153 cases for whom the presentence -- or pretrial assessments have been done, the PSAs, there were (indiscernible) for whom that wasn't done. Those are to come --

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry, Your Honor. There was a lag. I didn't hear the number mentioned.

THE COURT: There were 100- -- 1,193 who had -- on the list. PSAs were done on 1,153. Forty are outstanding, to come. Of the 1,153 cases, 565 have no prior violent convictions or prone to disqualifying charges involving violence or sexual offenses, and no other detention holds.

What's the status of those 565? Are they the ones in the backlog that the sheriff is going to send an updated list on so that they can be given prompt individualized bail determination hearings in each of the felony district judge's courts, with availability by Zoom for anybody who wants to appear in that fashion, and on -- even without a formal request?

MR. FOGLER: Your Honor, this is Murray Fogler. I

believe those are on the list, but they will be included when we 1 2 present the refreshed list to everybody hopefully tomorrow. THE COURT: Would you include me on that circulation 14:29:15 3 list, too, please? 4 MR. FOGLER: Of course. 14:29:20 5 MR. BUNIN: Judge, this is Alex Bunin, Harris County 14:29:25 7 Public Defender. I just wanted to point out that we're probably going to have some disagreements with the folks that Mr. Banks 8 excluded. There's some disagreement --9 THE COURT: I would expect so. 14:29:3510 14:29:3811 MR. BUNIN: Yeah. 14:29:4012 THE COURT: I would expect so, which is why you need 13 an individualized hearing, and you might need to put on 14 evidence. 14:29:4715 MR. KARAKATSANIS: Your Honor --14:29:4716 THE COURT: And that may be as simple as prior court 17 records. 14:29:5218 MR. KARAKATSANIS: I think it's very important, 19 Your Honor, to understand two key facts I worry are being lost here. Number one is that there are almost 4,000 people in the 20 Harris County jail right now who have not received a formal bail 21 hearing in front of a felony district court judge. What we're 22 talking about now is a carefully curated list of people from the 23 sheriff who we all believe, informally among this group here on 24

the phone, are the most likely to be given release because they

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1 have no prior --

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THE COURT: Right.

MR. KARAKATSANIS: -- (indiscernible) no -- everybody else is still entitled to a hearing, and what Mr. Bunin is saying is that, in fact, there are people who are not on that list, by the time it gets to the judges, solely because of some decision that they disagree with.

So I think what's critical is that we develop some -- and we're not opposed to starting with those people that we all believe are most likely to get released --

THE COURT: Right.

MR. KARAKATSANIS: -- that's what we thought was
happening last week, and we're learning it didn't happen, but --

THE COURT: I think we have a starting point,
Mr. Bunin.

MR. KARAKATSANIS: -- everybody gets --

THE COURT: I think we have -- I agree. I think we ought to start with the ones who are most likely to be released. Get those, as quickly as possible, done, and then we'll have a third list of those who have been -- who (indiscernible) charge. They're entitled to a hearing. It may well be denied easily because of histories of violence, what they're charged with or other reasons, but they may be entitled to a hearing. And it may be a very short hearing, who knows -- I certainly don't -- but they're entitled to have their cases docketed.

What's the procedure for doing those? Essentially, the second backlog, as well as new arrestees who fall in that category.

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And I guess the question here is: What is the allegation of the judge to hold a hearing for those who facially are not eligible for release on a PR bond.

Mr. Manne, what is your position on behalf of your client, or Mr. Karakatsanis?

MR. KARAKATSANIS: Your Honor, all of these individuals are, quote, unquote, eligible for release on a PR bond. That's up to the felony district court judge. They all have the same, as presumptively innocent --

THE COURT: Well, they are -- yes. I agree. None of these people are convicted --

MR. KARAKATSANIS: Correct.

THE COURT: -- of anything.

MR. KARAKATSANIS: In fact, as in federal court, many people charged with very serious offenses are released, if the Court determines that that are other conditions, short of detention, that could reasonably assure public safety and their court appearance. So from our perspective, the procedure that this Court outlined last week for batch No. 1, as soon as batch No. 1 is over, that same procedure could and should, and the sheriff is prepared to apply, to everybody else.

THE COURT: I don't disagree. We have three

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categories. The new arrests, as to whom this procedure is being applied; whether they are likely to be released, that is, not clearly within one of the disqualifying or -- criteria, such as charged with a violent -- or a violent offense currently or a recent conviction for violent sexual assault. They're still entitled to a hearing. You're right.

And there is the second wave, the second list of people who have been arrested, are likely to be released in the sense that not -- and maybe there are disputed disqualifying prior or present -- prior convictions and present charges, but they're disputed, or it is undisputed that there are none.

That's sort of the second priority because we have the greatest prospect of getting those individuals -- or those individuals being entitled to some of the relief or all of the relief they seek.

And then the third category is the prior arrestees who have been denied, informally, any kind of bond who are indigent, but who would be entitled to a hearing. Now, I would -- now that the plaintiff class in this case, as I understand it, was limited to those who were detained solely because of their indigency, that doesn't mean that others were not entitled to hearings, and we're talking about the process, not the creation of any substantive right here.

So the sheriff --

JUDGE WARREN: Judge Rosenthal, may I --

THE COURT: Yes. Yes. Who is speaking, please? 14:35:25 1 JUDGE WARREN: This is Judge Warren. I apologize. 14:35:27 2 You -- you said recent history. May I have a 14:35:29 3 clarification as to what the Court means by "recent"? 4 THE COURT: It's not just recent. There's no time 14:35:36 5 limit in the executive order that applies, as I understand it. 6 JUDGE WARREN: Maybe I misunderstood, and I apologize. 14:35:45 7 THE COURT: But they're similarly -- no, you didn't. 14:35:47 8 I used the word, but it was an example, and I thought --9 JUDGE WARREN: Yes, ma'am. 14:35:5510 14:35:5611 THE COURT: -- I predicated it with that, but if I wasn't clear, I apologize. 12 14:35:5913 All right --14:35:5914 JUDGE WARREN: (Indiscernible.) 14:35:5915 THE COURT: -- so we have the three categories, but we 16 have -- no problem. My failure to communicate. 14:36:1117 We have the three categories in terms of triage, and I am very hopeful that we have a good way to go forward, 18 19 particularly with the sharing of information, and the opportunity for prompt intervention by interested parties to 20 ensure that this is being done. 21 MS. WOOD: Judge, may I? 14:36:3522 THE COURT: Who is this? 14:36:3823 14:36:4024 MS. WOOD: Hi. Sarah Wood from the public defender's 25 office. So we've been struggling to help the defense bar to

file more motions, deal with these changes and to keep them informed, and we've had, you know, some -- a few issues where it's difficult for us to get information that needs to be conveyed.

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And so following up on Judge Warren's question about eligibility -- or prioritization, perhaps, is a better word, we -- there's never been anything official or any sort of information really put out there about what are considered violent offenses.

So it's very difficult to tell how the lists are being created, what prior it is that your client may have that is the issue. So I -- I would suggest that that could be helpful, to make that policy known as far as it's being used to create the lists.

Additionally, we would --

THE COURT: In this case, Mr. Bunin, you may want to speak -- excuse me. Yeah. Go ahead. Go ahead, please. I thought you were finished. I'm sorry.

MS. WOOD: Oh, and just the other thing. Also, we're really trying to keep our members informed about how the court procedures are going to work logistically. I -- I think I heard the judge mention earlier that there was a multi-agency meeting about how the dockets are going to work, and I don't think that the public defender's office was included in that.

So we haven't received any information about these

docketing policies at this point. So -- so those are just a couple of places where, you know, it could be helpful.

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THE COURT: I -- I think that the best way to handle your first question is to have the DA, through Mr. Durfee, the sheriff, through Mr. Fogler, and, if appropriate, input from Mr. Biggs, on behalf of the Attorney General, on what the parties' shared understanding and the interested nonparties' shared understanding is of disqualifying and qualifying, that is, eligible offenses or offenses that, if currently charged or previously convicted, would be violent offenses for this purpose.

We did not define it across the board in prior -- in response to prior requests because it is -- can be quite complicated. But in this case, as I recall, there were some pretty good bright lines that the parties, themselves, through various kinds of orders and interpretations had applied. If there is a consensus as to those, that would be enormously helpful.

Second point, on the procedures, I believe that there has been a discussion. The sheriff came up with one that is being -- that hasn't been adopted by the judges, in part because they didn't think it was necessary, and there is an individualized approach. Some have used their courtrooms plus Zoom. Others are using only Zoom, I gather, and have made their homes Public Information Act courtrooms.

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If there is a way to put -- have individual judges inform the bar, private and public defender, what procedures they're following in their docketing -- in their notices of setting, for example, it would be helpful. But it sounds like for every court -- and, Judge Ritchie, please tell me if I'm right or wrong. Judge Warren -- it sounds like for every court, whether the judge is in court or him or herself Zooming in, the parties, the lawyers can appear by Zoom.

These hearings will be set automatically when the -when bail is denied on magistration or an informal hearing, and
they will be prioritized according to those who are potentially
eligible based on the absence of the violent offenses currently
charged or prior -- previously convicted or other holds and
violence or sexual assaults.

And then the second priority given to all of those who have been waiting, and the new arrests who may be subject to disqualifying prior or present charges or convictions, but who are entitled to a new hearing.

Does that help, Ms. Wood?

MS. WOOD: Yes, it does. Thank you, Judge.

THE COURT: I wish I could be more specific to each of the 22, but I know Judge Ritchie will work with those who are tasked with this incredibly important work to communicate it well, and I thank him for that.

With the information that will be exchanged, do the

parties agree that perhaps a phone call at the same time next week might be appropriate? I don't want to take up your time unnecessarily. This is a busy group.

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MR. MANNE: Your Honor, it's Neal Manne for the plaintiffs. We're always happy to get on a call like this.

We've been having these calls for three months. In my view, the process is a total failure. The minor incremental things that have been accomplished are dwarfed by the scope of the problem.

In the three months that we've been having these calls, the jail population has increased, not decreased.

There's a surge of COVID-19 in Texas. The governor attributes it, in part, to the jail. He's right.

THE COURT: He is right on that.

MR. MANNE: We don't -- I don't see this process solving either of the problems that the Court has focused on or the somewhat different issues that are the actual subject of our lawsuit.

THE COURT: I agree with the second.

MR. MANNE: We intend to bring all of the judges into the case soon, probably next week. The ones -- I'll put it this way: I believe that some of the judges are as unhappy with this situation and this process as the plaintiffs are, and I believe that some of the judges will be coming into this case as intervenors because they agree with the relief we seek.

The ones who don't, we'll bring in as defendants. We

will proceed with the case as quickly as we can to work dispositive motions. We want to try to get back to the issues that the case is actually about. We filed an emergency motion because we saw an emergency problem three months ago. The Court, in its wisdom, denied our motion.

I don't see the process that we have been engaged in since then as getting us toward any meaningful resolution of these issues, and so -- we're happy to participate in the calls as often as you want. We'll get on one every day, but we're also planning to try to restart the litigation and move it into a position where the Court can consider substantive motions.

THE COURT: And I don't disagree with that, Mr. Manne.

I have envisioned this and proceeding, if you will, along kind

of two tracks. On the first -- this case was stayed for a long

time on the parties' initiative to commit negotiations.

MR. MANNE: Right.

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THE COURT: So that stay has now been lifted to permit the parties to resume the focus on written and (indiscernible) traditional fashion, no pun intended, to focus on the discovery and exchange of information necessary to bring to the Court a full record adequate to rule on the substantive issues. A schedule order has been put into place to accomplish that, as you know.

I do not see that as inconsistent with interim measures designed to respond to this extraordinary crisis, and

that's what we're focusing on now, the very practical -- not the
jurisprudential so much as the practical. You got this backlog.

You got a lot of the people. You have judges who are out of
their courtrooms, and a reduction in the number of courtrooms.

You have lawyers perhaps unwilling and unable to come
to court because of the pandemic. All of these issues are
practical issues that require a very practical

the-devil-resides-in-the-details approach.

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At the same time, as the lawyers go through the process of developing the law and the facts in an adversarial fashion that the Court needs to make an accurate, fair ruling on the important issues of substantive law presented.

So this is a two-track road, and my question to this group is whether -- assuming it is worthwhile to continue to have accountability calls, if you will, should they be weekly, or do you want more time in between to implement the new procedures? You tell me.

Mr. Fogler, Mr. -- Judge Ritchie, excuse me,
Mr. Bunin --

MR. FOGLER: Your Honor, this is Murray Fogler. I think a weekly call is salutary. I think it helps spur activity. And while no one is satisfied, I think, if you let more time pass before you hear where we are, then I think there will be even less progress made.

THE COURT: I fear you may be right.

Is there anyone who would object to having a weekly 14:48:51 1 similar call? 2 MR. MANNE: The plaintiffs do not object. We'll be 14:48:56 3 happy to participate weekly. 4 THE COURT: Judge Ritchie, do you think it's helpful? 14:49:04 5 JUDGE RITCHIE: I think it's helpful, and I'll do my 14:49:06 6 7 best to attend --THE COURT: Thank you. 14:49:09 8 JUDGE RITCHIE: -- the calls. 14:49:10 9 THE COURT: I thank you for that. 14:49:1210 14:49:1711 All right. I think we have some additional tasks that 12 are clearly laid out, and I hope for some meaningful progress over the next week. I will look forward to virtually seeing you 13 14 a week from today, same time, same place. The link will be sent 15 out. 14:49:4016 Your presence and participation and practicality are 17 most appreciated. Thank you very much. I hope you-all continue to keep safe and well until we talk again. Thank you. 18 Anything further from anyone? 14:49:5919 14:50:0320 (No response.) THE COURT: There being nothing further, we are 14:50:0621 adjourned. I appreciate your help. 22 (Proceedings concluded at 2:50 p.m.) 14:50:1223 24 -000-I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript 25

from the record of proceedings in the above matter to the best of my ability and skill, and that any indiscernible designations are because of audio interference that precluded me from understanding the words spoken. Date: June 13, 2020 /s/ Heather Alcaraz Signature of Court Reporter

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